

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

220637Z May 01

2001HOCHI00616 - UNCLASSIFIED

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ACTION EAP-00

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|------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| INFO | LOG-00 | NP-00 | CIAE-00 | DOEE-00 | SRPP-00 | DS-00 | EB-00 |
| | FBIE-00 | UTED-00 | VC-00 | H-01 | TEDE-00 | INR-00 | L-00 |
| | VCE-00 | AC-01 | NSAE-00 | OMB-01 | OPIC-01 | PA-00 | PM-00 |
| | PRS-00 | ACE-00 | P-00 | SP-00 | SS-00 | USIE-00 | ECA-00 |
| | PMB-00 | DSCC-00 | DRL-02 | G-00 | NFAT-00 | SAS-00 | /006W |

-----EF7AF4 222120Z /15

FM AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 5085
INFO AMEMBASSY HANOI PRIORITY
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
ASEAN COLLECTIVE
USCINCPAC HONOLULU HI
JICPAC HONOLULU HI
SECDEF WASHDC
DIA WASHDC
NSC WASHDC
DEPTTREAS WASHDC
USDOC WASHDC

UNCLAS HO CHI MINH CITY 000616

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/BCLTV AND EAP/PD/JMARTIN
STATE ALSO FOR INR/EAP/SEA, INR/IL/B AND ECA/PE/V
CINCPAC FOR FPA
NSC FOR GCHRISTY
SECDEF FOR ISA/EA/LSTERN
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DEPTTREAS FOR AJEWELL
USDOC FOR 4431/MAC/AP/OKSA/HPPHO

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [VM](#) [DPOL](#)

SUBJECT: NEW SLATE OF HCMC LEADERS WILL STAY THE COURSE

REF: A. HCMC 0562 B. HCMC 0438

1. REF A REPORTED THAT LE THANH HAI, FIRST VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE HCMC PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE, WAS ONE OF TWO FRONT RUNNERS TO REPLACE VO VIET THANH FOR THE JOB OF CHAIRMAN OF THE PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE. ON MAY 18, IN AN IRREGULAR SESSION OF THE HCMC PEOPLE'S COUNCIL, HAI WAS SELECTED THE NEW CHAIRMAN. THE MAY 19 EDITION OF THE DAILY "TUOI TRE" ("YOUTH") REPORTED THAT HAI GAINED 91 PERCENT OF THE PEOPLE'S COUNCIL VOTES AND THAT NO OTHER CANDIDATE WAS NOMINATED. HE WILL SERVE OUT THE REMAINING REGULAR TERM OF THE CHAIRMANSHIP, WHICH BEGAN IN 1999 AND WILL END IN 2004.

2. REF B REPORTED THAT LE THANH HAI WAS COMMUNIST PARTY SECRETARY FOR HCMC'S PROSPEROUS DISTRICT 5, MUCH OF WHICH

SIPDIS
FORMED PART OF OLD CHOLON (CHINATOWN), DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF "DOI MOI" FROM 1986 TO 1996. HAI WAS BORN IN 1950 IN THE MEKONG DELTA. HE HOLDS AN M.A. IN ECONOMICS AND A B.A. IN LITERATURE. HE IS MARRIED AND HAS TWO CHILDREN. HE IS EXPECTED TO CONTINUE THE PROGRESSIVE POLICIES OF THANH, BUT MAY BE A BLANDER PROPONENT OF PROGRESSIVE POLICIES THAN WAS HIS PREDECESSOR THANH.

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3. THREE NEW PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE VICE-CHAIRMEN WERE ALSO SELECTED AT THE SPECIAL SESSION. MS. HUYNH THI NHAN IS 49 YEARS OLD, HOLDS B.A.S IN LAW, POLITICS AND ECONOMICS, AND IS CURRENTLY DIRECTOR OF HCMC DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND PRICING. NGUYEN THANH TAI IS 49 YEARS OLD, HOLDS B.A.S IN ECONOMICS AND LITERATURE, AND IS CURRENTLY CHIEF OF STAFF AT THE OFFICE OF THE HCMC PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE. MAI QUOC BINH IS 50 YEARS OLD, HOLDS A PH.D. IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION, AND IS A MEMBER OF THE HCMC PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE. HE PARTICIPATED IN AN INTERNATIONAL VISITORS PROGRAM ON ETHICS IN BUSINESS IN 1999. HIS MAIN DUTY THE PAST TWO YEARS HAS BEEN TO HEAD HCMC'S EFFORTS AT ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM. THE PORTFOLIOS OF THE NEW VICE-CHAIRMEN HAVE NOT YET BEEN ANNOUNCED.

4. VO VIET THANH, WHO WAS FIRST SELECTED ACTING CHAIRMAN

OF THE HCMC PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE IN 1996, HAD BEEN
THREATENING TO RESIGN FOR AT LEAST TWO YEARS, FRUSTRATED
WITH HANOI'S SLOW MOVEMENT ON ECONOMIC REFORM. AT THE AGE
OF 58, IT IS UNCLEAR WHETHER THANH WILL SEEK ANOTHER
GOVERNMENT POSITION. THE DEPARTING PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE
VICE-CHAIRMEN ARE 49-YEAR-OLD MS. PHAM PHUONG THAO, WHO
WAS RECENTLY ASSIGNED TO HEAD THE HCMC COMMUNIST PARTY
COMMISSION ON IDEOLOGY AND CULTURE (THAO CONTINUES TO HOLD
HER SEAT ON THE 15-MEMBER STANDING BOARD OF THE HCMC
COMMUNIST PARTY COMMITTEE), AND 60-YEAR-OLD TRAN NGOC CON,
WHO WAS NOT ASSIGNED ANOTHER POSITION AND WILL PROBABLY
RETIRE.

COMMENT

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15. AS MENTIONED, THE SELECTION OF HAI AS HCMC PEOPLE'S
COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN CAME AS NO SURPRISE. THE THREE NEW
VICE-CHAIRMEN ARE NOT VERY WELL KNOWN TO POST, BUT DO NOT
APPEAR TO PORTEND ANY GREAT CHANGE. THERE WAS ONLY A
BRIEF MENTION OF THE HCMC PEOPLE'S COMMITTEE CHANGES IN
THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE PRESS, AND "TUOI TRE" WAS THE ONLY
VIETNAMESE VERNACULAR DAILY TO CARRY THE CHANGES AS ITS
LEAD STORY. POST EXPECTS NO REAL DEPARTURE FROM THE
PREVIOUS CITY ADMINISTRATION'S COURSE; APPARENTLY, THE
VIETNAMESE MEDIA THOUGHT THERE WAS LITTLE NEWS IN THE
CHANGES EITHER.

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